UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/49/188
6 March 1995

Forty-ninth session
Agenda item 100 (b)

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/49/610/Add.2)]

49/188. Elimination of all forms of religious intolerance

The General Assembly,

Recalling that all States have pledged themselves, under the Charter of the United Nations, to promote and encourage universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

Recognizing that these rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person,

Welcoming the general comment 1/ of the Human Rights Committee on article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 2/

Emphasizing that the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief is far-reaching and profound and that it encompasses freedom of thought on all matters, personal conviction and the commitment to religion or belief, whether manifested individually or in community with others,

Recalling article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

---

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 40 (A/48/40), annex VI.

2/ See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

Reaffirming that discrimination against human beings on the grounds of religion or belief constitutes an affront to human dignity and a disavowal of the principles of the Charter,

Reaffirming its resolution 36/55 of 25 November 1981, by which it proclaimed the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief,

Recalling its resolution 48/128 of 20 December 1993, in which it requested the Commission on Human Rights to continue its consideration of measures to implement the Declaration,

Taking note of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1994/18 of 25 February 1994, 3/

Reaffirming the call of the World Conference on Human Rights for all Governments to take all appropriate measures in compliance with their international obligations and with due regard to their respective legal systems to counter intolerance and related violence based on religion or belief, including practices of discrimination against women and the desecration of religious sites, recognizing that every individual has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, expression and religion,

Recalling Commission on Human Rights resolution 1992/17 of 21 February 1992 4/ in which Commission decided to extend for three years the mandate of the Special Rapporteur appointed to examine incidents and governmental actions in all parts of the world that are incompatible with the provisions of the Declaration and to recommend remedial measures, as appropriate, and recalling also Economic and Social Council decision 1992/226 of 20 July 1992,

Calling upon all Governments to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, Mr. Abdelfattah Amor, to enable him to carry out his mandate fully,

Recognizing that it is desirable to enhance the promotional and public information activities of the United Nations in matters relating to freedom of religion or belief and that both Governments and non-governmental organizations have an important role to play in this domain,

Emphasizing that non-governmental organizations and religious bodies and groups at every level have an important role to play in the promotion of tolerance and the protection of freedom of religion or belief,

Conscious of the importance of education in ensuring tolerance of religion and belief,

Welcoming the inclusion of events relating to tolerance and religious diversity among the activities to be undertaken during the United Nations Year for Tolerance, with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as the lead organization,

Alarmed that serious instances, including acts of violence, of intolerance and discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief occur in many parts of the world,

---

3/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1994, Supplement No. 4 and corrigendum (E/1994/24 and Corr.1), chap. II, sect. A.

4/ Ibid, 1992, Supplement No. 2 (E/1992/22), chap. II, sect. A.

Deeply concerned that, as reported by the Special Rapporteur, the rights violated on religious grounds include the right to life, the right to physical integrity and to liberty and security of person, the right to freedom of expression, the right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and the right not to be arbitrarily arrested or detained, 5/

Deeply concerned also at the increasing number of acts of violence, intimidation and coercion motivated by religious extremism in all its forms that, in many parts of the world, threaten the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Reaffirming the dismay and condemnation expressed by the World Conference on Human Rights at the continued occurrence of gross and systematic violations and situations that constitute serious obstacles to the full enjoyment of all human rights, including religious intolerance,

Believing that further efforts are therefore required to promote and protect the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief and to eliminate all forms of hatred, intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief,

1. Reaffirms that freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief is a human right derived from the inherent dignity of the human person and guaranteed to all without discrimination;

2. Urges States to ensure that their constitutional and legal systems provide full guarantees of freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief to all without discrimination, including the provision of effective remedies in cases where the right to freedom of religion or belief is violated;

3. Urges States to ensure, in particular, that no one within their jurisdiction is, on account of their religion or belief, deprived of the right to life or the right to liberty and security of person, or subjected to torture or arbitrary arrest or detention;

4. Condemns all instances of hatred, intolerance and acts of violence, intimidation and coercion motivated by religious extremism and intolerance of religion or belief;

5. Urges States, in conformity with international standards of human rights, to take all necessary action to prevent such instances, to take all appropriate measures to combat hatred, intolerance and acts of violence, intimidation and coercion motivated by religious extremism, and to encourage understanding, tolerance and respect in matters relating to freedom of religion or belief;

6. Recognizes that legislation alone is not enough to prevent violations of human rights, including the right to freedom of religion or belief;

7. Emphasizes that, as underlined by the Human Rights Committee, restrictions on the freedom to manifest religion or belief are permitted only if limitations are prescribed by law, are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others, and are applied in a manner that does not vitiate the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion;

5/ See E/CN.4/1994/79, para 103.

8. Urges States to ensure that, in the course of their official duties, members of law enforcement bodies, civil servants, educators and other public officials respect different religions and beliefs and do not discriminate against persons professing other religions or beliefs;

9. Calls upon all States to recognize, as provided in the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, the right of all persons to worship or assemble in connection with a religion or belief, and to establish and maintain places for those purposes;

10. Expresses its grave concern at attacks upon religious places, sites and shrines, and calls upon all States, in accordance with their national legislation and in conformity with international human rights standards, to exert utmost efforts to ensure that such places, sites and shrines are fully respected and protected;

11. Recognizes that the exercise of tolerance and non-discrimination by persons and groups is necessary for the full realization of the aims of the Declaration;

12. Considers it desirable to enhance the promotional and public information activities of the United Nations in matters relating to freedom of religion or belief and to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to this end in the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights;

13. Invites the Secretary-General to continue to give high priority to the dissemination of the text of the Declaration, in all the official languages of the United Nations, and to take all appropriate measures to make the text available for use by United Nations information centres, as well as by other interested bodies;

14. Encourages the continued efforts on the part of the Special Rapporteur appointed to examine incidents and governmental actions in all parts of the world that are incompatible with the provisions of the Declaration and to recommend remedial measures as appropriate;

15. Encourages Governments to give serious consideration to inviting the Special Rapporteur to visit their countries so as to enable him to fulfil his mandate even more effectively;

16. Recommends that the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion be given appropriate priority in the work of the United Nations programme of advisory services in the field of human rights, including with regard to the drafting of basic legal texts in conformity with international instruments on human rights and taking into account the provisions of the Declaration;

17. Welcomes the efforts of non-governmental organizations to promote the implementation of the Declaration;

18. Requests the Secretary-General to invite interested non-governmental organizations to consider what further role they could envisage playing in the implementation of the Declaration and in its dissemination in national and local languages;

19. Urges all States to consider disseminating the text of the Declaration in their respective national languages and to facilitate its dissemination in national and local languages;

20. Requests the Commission on Human Rights to continue its consideration of measures to implement the Declaration;

21. Requests the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session;

22. Decides to consider the question of the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance at its fiftieth session under the item entitled "Human rights questions".

94th plenary meeting
23 December 1994